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FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
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INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY RIYADH IMMEDIATE
ARABLEAGUE COLLECTIVE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 05 BAGHDAD 04237

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
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SUBJECT: SADDAM'S MESSAGE OF FRIENDSHIP TO PRESIDENT BUSH

11. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.

12. SUMMARY: SADDAM TOLD THE AMBASSADOR JULY 25 THAT MUBARAK HAS ARRANGED FOR KUWAITI AND IRAQI DELEGATIONS TO MEET IN RIYADH, AND THEN ON JULY 28, 29 OR 30, THE KUWAITI CROWN PRINCE WILL COME TO BAGHDAD FOR SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS. "NOTHING WILL HAPPEN" BEFORE THEN, SADDAM HAD PROMISED MUBARAK.

--SADDAM WISHED TO CONVEY AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT BUSH: IRAQ WANTS FRIENDSHIP, BUT DOES THE USG? IRAQ SUFFERED 100,000'S OF CASUALTIES AND IS NOW SO POOR THAT WAR ORPHAN PENSIONS WILL SOON BE CUT; YET RICH KUWAIT WILL NOT EVEN ACCEPT OPEC DISCIPLINE. IRAQ IS SICK OF WAR, BUT KUWAIT HAS IGNORED DIPLOMACY. USG MANEUVERS WITH THE UAE WILL ENCOURAGE THE UAE AND KUWAIT TO IGNORE CONVENTIONAL DIPLOMACY. IF IRAQ IS PUBLICLY HUMILIATED BY THE USG, IT WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO "RESPOND," HOWEVER ILLOGICAL AND SELF DESTRUCTIVE THAT WOULD PROVE.

--ALTHOUGH NOT QUITE EXPLICIT, SADDAM'S MESSAGE TO US SEEMED TO BE THAT HE WILL MAKE A MAJOR PUSH TO COOPERATE WITH MUBARAK'S DIPLOMACY, BUT WE MUST TRY TO UNDERSTAND KUWAITI/UAE "SELFISHNESS" IS UNBEARABLE. AMBASSADOR MADE CLEAR THAT WE CAN NEVER EXCUSE SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES BY OTHER THAN PEACEFUL MEANS. END SUMMARY.

13. AMBASSADOR WAS SUMMONED BY PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSAYN AT NOON JULY 25. ALSO PRESENT WERE FONMIN AZIZ, THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE DIRECTOR, TWO NOTETAKERS, AND THE IRAQI INTERPRETER.

14. SADDAM, WHOSE MANNER WAS CORDIAL, REASONABLE AND EVEN WARM THROUGHOUT THE ENSUING TWO HOURS, SAID HE WISHED THE AMBASSADOR TO CONVEY A MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT BUSH. SADDAM THEN RECALLED IN DETAIL THE HISTORY OF IRAQ'S DECISION TO REESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND ITS POSTPONING IMPLEMENTATION OF THAT DECISION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR, RATHER THAN BE THOUGHT WEAK AND NEEDY. HE THEN SPOKE ABOUT THE MANY "BLOWS" OUR RELATIONS HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO SINCE 1984, CHIEF AMONG THEM IRANGATE. IT WAS AFTER THE FAW VICTORY, SADDAM SAID, THAT IRAQI MISAPPREHENSIONS ABOUT USG PURPOSES BEGAN TO SURFACE AGAIN, I.E., SUSPICIONS THAT THE U.S. WAS NOT HAPPY TO SEE THE WAR END.

15. PICKING HIS WORDS WITH CARE, SADDAM SAID THAT THERE ARE "SOME CIRCLES" IN THE USG, INCLUDING IN CIA AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT, BUT EMPHATICALLY EXCLUDING THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY BAKER, WHO ARE NOT FRIENDLY TOWARD IRAQ-U.S. RELATIONS. HE THEN LISTED WHAT HE SEEMED TO REGARD AS FACTS TO SUPPORT THIS CONCLUSION: "SOME CIRCLES ARE GATHERING INFORMATION ON WHO MIGHT BE SADDAM HUSAYN'S SUCCESSOR;" THEY KEPT UP CONTACTS IN THE GULF

WARNING AGAINST IRAQ; THEY WORKED TO ENSURE NO HELP WOULD GO TO IRAQ (READ EXIM AND CCC).

¶6. IRAQ, THE PRESIDENT STRESSED, IS IN SERIOUS FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES, WITH 40 BILLION USD DEBTS. IRAQ, WHOSE VICTORY IN THE WAR AGAINST IRAN MADE AN HISTORIC DIFFERENCE TO THE ARAB WORLD AND THE WEST, NEEDS A MARSHALL PLAN. BUT "YOU WANT THE OIL PRICE DOWN," SADDAM CHARGED.

¶7. RESUMING HIS LIST OF GRIEVANCES WHICH HE BELIEVED WERE ALL INSPIRED BY "SOME CIRCLES" IN THE USG, HE RECALLED THE "USIA CAMPAIGN" AGAINST HIMSELF, AND THE GENERAL MEDIA ASSAULT ON IRAQ AND ITS PRESIDENT.

¶8. DESPITE ALL THESE BLOWS, SADDAM SAID, AND ALTHOUGH "WE WERE SOMEWHAT ANNOYED," WE STILL HOPED THAT WE COULD DEVELOP A GOOD RELATIONSHIP. BUT THOSE WHO FORCE OIL PRICES DOWN ARE ENGAGING IN ECONOMIC WARFARE AND IRAQ CANNOT ACCEPT SUCH A TRESPASS ON ITS DIGNITY AND PROSPERITY.

¶9. THE SPEARHEADS (FOR THE USG) HAVE BEEN KUWAIT AND THE UAE, SADDAM SAID. SADDAM SAID CAREFULLY THAT JUST AS IRAQ WILL NOT THREATEN OTHERS, IT WILL ACCEPT NO THREAT AGAINST ITSELF. "WE HOPE THE USG WILL NOT MISUNDERSTAND:" IRAQ ACCEPTS, AS THE STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID, THAT ANY COUNTRY MAY CHOOSE ITS FRIENDS. BUT THE USG KNOWS THAT IT WAS IRAQ, NOT THE USG, WHICH DECISIVELY PROTECTED THOSE USG FRIENDS DURING THE WAR--AND THAT IS UNDERSTANDABLE SINCE PUBLIC OPINION IN THE USG, TO SAY NOTHING OF GEOGRAPHY, WOULD HAVE MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE AMERICANS TO ACCEPT 10,000 DEAD IN A SINGLE BATTLE, AS IRAQ DID.

¶10. SADDAM ASKED WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR THE USG TO ANNOUNCE IT IS COMMITTED TO THE DEFENSE OF ITS FRIENDS, INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY. ANSWERING HIS OWN QUESTION, HE SAID THAT TO IRAQ IT MEANS FLAGRANT BIAS AGAINST THE GOI.

¶11. COMING TO ONE OF HIS MAIN POINTS, SADDAM ARGUED THAT USG MANEUVERS WITH THE UAE AND KUWAIT (SIC) ENCOURAGED THEM IN THEIR UNGENEROUS POLICIES. THE IRAQI RIGHTS, SADDAM EMPHASIZED, WILL BE RESTORED ONE BY ONE, THOUGH IT MAY TAKE A MONTH OR MUCH MORE THAN A YEAR. IRAQ HOPES THE USG WILL BE IN HARMONY WITH ALL THE PARTIES TO THIS DISPUTE.

¶12. SADDAM SAID HE UNDERSTANDS THAT THE USG IS DETERMINED TO KEEP THE OIL FLOWING AND TO MAINTAIN ITS FRIENDSHIPS IN THE GULF. WHAT HE CANNOT UNDERSTAND IS WHY WE ENCOURAGE THOSE WHO ARE DAMAGING IRAQ, WHICH IS WHAT OUR GULF MANEUVERS WILL DO.

¶13. SADDAM SAID HE FULLY BELIEVES THE USG WANTS PEACE, AND THAT IS GOOD. BUT DO NOT, HE ASKED, USE METHODS WHICH YOU SAY YOU DO NOT LIKE, METHODS LIKE ARM-TWISTING--

¶14. AT THIS POINT SADDAM SPOKE AT LENGTH ABOUT PRIDE OF IRAQIS, WHO BELIEVE IN "LIBERTY OR DEATH." IRAQ WILL HAVE TO RESPOND IF THE U.S. USES THESE METHODS. IRAQ KNOWS THE USG CAN SEND PLANES AND ROCKETS AND HURT IRAQ DEEPLY. SADDAM ASKS THAT THE USG NOT FORCE IRAQ TO THE POINT OF HUMILIATION AT WHICH LOGIC MUST BE DISREGARDED. IRAQ DOES NOT CONSIDER THE U.S. AN ENEMY AND HAS TRIED TO BE FRIENDS.

¶15. AS FOR THE INTRA-ARAB DISPUTES, SADDAM SAID HE IS NOT ASKING THE USG TO TAKE UP ANY PARTICULAR ROLE SINCE THE SOLUTIONS MUST COME THROUGH ARAB AND BILATERAL DIPLOMACY.

¶16. RETURNING TO HIS THEME THAT IRAQ WANTS DIGNITY AND FREEDOM AS WELL AS FRIENDSHIP WITH THE U.S., HE CHARGED THAT IN THE LAST YEAR THERE WERE MANY OFFICIAL STATEMENTS WHICH MADE IT SEEM THAT THE U.S. DOES NOT WANT TO RECIPROCATE. HOW, FOR EXAMPLE, SADDAM ASKED, CAN WE INTERPRET THE INVITATION FOR ARENS TO VISIT AT A TIME OF CRISIS IN THE GULF? WHY DID THE U.S. DEFENSE MINISTER MAKE "INFLAMMATORY" STATEMENTS?

¶17. SADDAM SAID THAT THE IRAQIS KNOW WHAT WAR IS, WANT NO MORE OF IT--"DO NOT PUSH US TO IT; DO NOT MAKE IT THE ONLY OPTION LEFT WITH WHICH WE CAN PROTECT OUR DIGNITY."

¶18. PRESIDENT BUSH, SADDAM SAID, HAS MADE NO MISTAKE IN HIS PRESIDENCY VIS-A-VIS THE ARABS. THE DECISION ON THE PLO DIALOGUE WAS "MISTAKEN," BUT IT WAS TAKEN UNDER "ZIONIST PRESSURE" AND, SADDAM SAID, IS PERHAPS A CLEVER TACTIC TO ABSORB THAT PRESSURE.

¶19. AFTER A SHORT DIVERSION ON THE NEED FOR THE U.S. TO CONSIDER THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF 200,000 ARABS WITH THE SAME VIGOR AND INTEREST AS THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE ISRAELIS, SADDAM CONCLUDED BY RESTATING THAT IRAQ WANTS AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP "ALTHOUGH WE WILL NOT PANT FOR IT, WE WILL DO OUR PART AS FRIENDS."

¶20. SADDAM THEN OFFERED AN ANECDOTE TO ILLUSTRATE HIS POINT. HE HAD TOLD THE IRAQI KURDISH LEADER IN 1974 THAT HE WAS PREPARED TO GIVE UP HALF OF THE SHATT AL-ARAB TO IRAN TO OBTAIN ALL OF A PROSPEROUS IRAQ. THE KURD HAD BET THAT SADDAM WOULD NOT GIVE HALF THE SHATT--THE KURD WAS WRONG. EVEN NOW, THE ONLY REAL ISSUE WITH IRAN IS THE SHATT, AND IF GIVING AWAY HALF OF THE WATERWAY IS THE ONLY THING STANDING BETWEEN THE CURRENT SITUATION AND IRAQI PROSPERITY, SADDAM SAID HE WOULD BE GUIDED BY WHAT HE DID IN 1974.

¶21. THE AMBASSADOR THANKED SADDAM FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS DIRECTLY WITH HIM SOME OF HIS AND OUR CONCERNS. PRESIDENT BUSH, TOO, WANTS FRIENDSHIP, AS HE HAD WRITTEN AT THE 'ID AND ON THE OCCASION OF IRAQ'S NATIONAL DAY. SADDAM INTERRUPTED TO SAY HE HAD BEEN TOUCHED BY THOSE

¶22. AMBASSADOR RESUMED HER THEME, RECALLING THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD INSTRUCTED HER TO BROADEN AND DEEPEN OUR RELATIONS WITH IRAQ. SADDAM HAD REFERRED TO "SOME CIRCLES" ANTIPATHETIC TO THAT AIM. SUCH CIRCLES CERTAINLY EXISTED, BUT THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION IS INSTRUCTED BY THE PRESIDENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PRESIDENT DOES NOT CONTROL THE AMERICAN PRESS; IF HE DID, CRITICISM OF THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD NOT EXIST. SADDAM AGAIN INTERRUPTED TO SAY HE UNDERSTOOD THAT. THE AMBASSADOR SAID SHE HAD SEEN THE DIANE SAWYER SHOW AND THOUGHT THAT IT WAS CHEP AND UNFAIR. BUT THE AMERICAN PRESS TREATS ALL POLITICIANS WITHOUT KID GLOVES--THAT IS OUR WAY.

¶23. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS VERY RECENTLY REAFFIRMED HIS DESIRE FOR A BETTER RELATIONSHIP AND HAS PROVEN THAT BY, FOR EXAMPLE, OPPOSING SANCTIONS BILLS. HERE SADDAM INTERRUPTED AGAIN. LAUGHING, HE SAID THERE IS NOTHING LEFT FOR IRAQ TO BUY IN THE U.S. EVERYTHING IS PROHIBITED EXCEPT FOR WHEAT, AND NO DOUBT THAT WILL SOON BE DECLARED A DUAL-USE ITEM- SADDAM SAID, HOWEVER, HE HAD DECIDED NOT TO RAISE THIS ISSUE, BUT RATHER CONCENTRATE ON THE FAR MORE IMPORTANT ISSUES AT HAND.

¶24. AMBASSADOR SAID THERE WERE MANY ISSUES HE HAD RAISED SHE WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ON, BUT SHE WISHED TO USE HER LIMITED TIME WITH THE PRESIDENT TO STRESS FIRST PRESIDENT BUSH'S DESIRE FOR FRIENDSHIP AND, SECOND, HIS STRONG DESIRE, SHARED

WE ASSUME BY IRAQ, FOR PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE MID EAST. IS IT NOT REASONABLE FOR US TO BE CONCERNED WHEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER BOTH SAY PUBLICLY THAT KUWAITI ACTIONS ARE THE EQUIVALENT OF MILITARY AGGRESSION, AND THEN WE LEARN THAT MANY UNITS OF THE REPUBLICAN GUARD HAVE BEEN SENT TO THE BORDER? IS IT NOT REASONABLE FOR US TO ASK, IN THE SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP, NOT CONFRONTATION, THE SIMPLE QUESTION: WHAT ARE YOUR INTENTIONS?

125. SADDAM SAID THAT WAS INDEED A REASONABLE QUESTION. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT WE SHOULD BE CONCERNED FOR REGIONAL PEACE, IN FACT IT IS OUR DUTY AS A SUPERPOWER. "BUT HOW CAN WE MAKE THEM (KUWAIT AND UAE) UNDERSTAND HOW DEEPLY WE ARE SUFFERING." THE FINANCIAL SITUATION IS SUCH THAT THE PENSIONS FOR WIDOWS AND ORPHANS WILL HAVE TO BE CUT. AT THIS POINT, THE INTERPRETER AND ONE OF THE NOTETAKERS BROKE DOWN AND WEPT.

126. AFTER A PAUSE FOR RECUPERATION, SADDAM SAID, IN EFFECT, BELIEVE ME I HAVE TRIED EVERYTHING: WE SENT ENVOYS, WROTE MESSAGES, ASKED FAHD TO ARRANGE QUADRIPARTITE SUMMIT (IRAQ, SAU, UAE, KUWAIT). FAHD SUGGESTED OIL MINISTERS INSTEAD AND WE AGREED TO THE JEDDAH AGREEMENT ALTHOUGH IT WAS WELL BELOW OUR HOPES. THEN, SADDAM CONTINUED, TWO DAYS LATER THE KUWAITI OIL MINISTER ANNOUNCED HE WOULD WANT TO ANNUL THAT AGREEMENT WITHIN TWO MONTHS. AS FOR THE UAE, SADDAM SAID, I BEGGED SHAYKH ZAYID TO UNDERSTAND OUR PROBLEMS (WHEN SADDAM ENTERTAINED HIM IN MOSUL AFTER THE BAGHDAD SUMMIT), AND ZAYID SAID JUST WAIT UNTIL I GET BACK TO ABU DHABI. BUT THEN HIS MINISTER OF OIL MADE "BAD STATEMENTS."

127. AT THIS POINT, SADDAM LEFT THE ROOM TO TAKE AN URGENT CALL FROM MUBARAK. AFTER HIS RETURN, THE AMBASSADOR ASKED IF HE COULD TELL HER IF THERE HAS ANY PROGRESS IN FINDING A PEACEFUL WAY TO DEFUSE THE DISPUTE. THIS WAS SOMETHING PRESIDENT BUSH WOULD BE KEENLY INTERESTED TO KNOW. SADDAM SAID THAT HE HAD JUST LEARNED FROM MUBARAK THE KUWAITIS HAVE AGREED TO NEGOTIATE. THE KUWAITI CROWN PRINCE/PRIME MINISTER WOULD MEET IN RIYADH WITH SADDAM'S NUMBER TWO, IZZAT IBRAHIM, AND THEN THE KUWAITI WOULD COME TO BAGHDAD ON SATURDAY, SUNDAY OR, AT THE LATEST, MONDAY, JULY 30.

128. "I TOLD MUBARAK," SADDAM SAID, THAT "NOTHING WILL HAPPEN UNTIL THE MEETING," AND NOTHING WILL HAPPEN DURING OR AFTER THE MEETING IF THE KUWAITIS WILL AT LAST "GIVE US SOME HOPE."

129. THE AMBASSADOR SAID SHE WAS DELIGHTED TO HEAR THIS GOOD NEWS. SADDAM THEN ASKED HER TO CONVEY HIS WARM GREETINGS TO PRESIDENT BUSH AND TO CONVEY HIS MESSAGE TO HIM.

130. NOTE: ON THE BORDER QUESTION, SADDAM REFERRED TO THE 1961 AGREEMENT AND A "LINE OF PATROL" IT HAD ESTABLISHED. THE KUWAITIS, HE SAID, HAD TOLD MUBARAK IRAQ WAS 20 KILOMETERS "IN FRONT" OF THIS LINE. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT SHE HAD SERVED IN KUWAIT 20 YEARS BEFORE; THEN, AS NOW, WE TOOK NO POSITION ON THESE ARAB AFFAIRS.

131. COMMENT: IN THE MEMORY OF THE CURRENT DIPLOMATIC CORPS, SADDAM HAS NEVER SUMMONED AN AMBASSADOR. HE IS WORRIED.

ACCORDING TO HIS OWN POLITICAL THEORIZING (U.S. THE SOLE MAJOR POWER IN THE MIDDLE EAST), HE NEEDS AT A MINIMUM A CORRECT RELATIONSHIP WITH US FOR OBVIOUS GEOPOLITICAL REASONS, ESPECIALLY AS LONG AS HE PERCEIVES MORTAL THREATS FROM ISRAEL AND IRAN. AMBASSADOR

BELIEVES SADDAM SUSPECTS OUR DECISION SUDDENLY TO UNDERTAKE MANEUVERS WITH ABU DHABI IS A HARBINGER OF A USG DECISION TO TAKE SIDES. FURTHER, SADDAM, HIMSELF BEGINNING TO HAVE AN INKLING OF HOW MUCH HE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND ABOUT THE U.S., IS APPREHENSIVE THAT WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND CERTAIN POLITICAL FACTORS WHICH INHIBIT HIM, SUCH AS:

--HE CANNOT ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE PERCEIVED AS CAVING IN TO SUPERPOWER BULLYING (AS U/S HAMDUN FRANKLY WARNED US IN LATE 1988);

--IRAQ, WHICH LOST 100,000'S OF CASUALTIES, IS SUFFERING AND KUWAIT IS "MISERLY" AND "SELFISH."

¶32. IT WAS PROGRESS TO HAVE SADDAM ADMIT THAT THE USG HAS A "RESPONSIBILITY" IN THE REGION, AND HAS EVERY RIGHT TO EXPECT AN ANSWER WHEN WE ASK IRAQ'S INTENTIONS. HIS RESPONSE IN EFFECT THAT HE TRIED VARIOUS DIPLOMATIC/CHANNELS BEFORE RESORTING TO UNADULTERATED INTIMIDATION HAS AT LEAST THE VIRTUE OF FRANKNESS. HIS EMPHASIS THAT HE WANTS PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IS SURELY SINCERE (IRAQIS ARE SICK OF WAR), BUT THE TERMS SOUND DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE. SADDAM SEEMS TO WANT PLEDGES NOW ON OIL PRICES AND PRODUCTION TO COVER THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS.

GLASPIE